



SPAWAR Information Technology Center
Public Affairs Office
2251 Lakeshore Drive
New Orleans, Louisiana 70145

(504) 697-2080
(504) 697-2073
FAX (504) 697-2197

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Carpenter Assumes Command of DIMHRS as Sweeney Begins His Retirement

In a ceremony that exemplified jointness, the Navy, Navy Reserve, Air National Guard, and Marine Corps Reserve came together to participate in the Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System (DIMHRS) Change of Command ceremony held at the SPAWAR ITC in New Orleans on July 31.

VADM Patricia Tracey, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy, presided over the event which included a retirement ceremony for outgoing Joint Program Manager Col. Lawrence E. Sweeney, USAF.

Capt. Valerie Carpenter, USN, assumed command of DIMHRS.

The auditorium was filled to capacity as honors were paid to Sweeney for his 29 years of service to the Air Force and to the Navy as the DIMHRS Joint Program Manager, a position he assumed in January 2000.

During the ceremony Sweeney paid tribute to his wife and mother with flowers and mementos for their support throughout his career. Also in attendance were his children, a sister, and a nephew.

Sweeney received numerous awards and certificates to include the Air Force Defense Superior Service Medal. He also received Letters of Appreciation from President George W. Bush, Louisiana Governor Mike Foster and New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial, along with a proclamation from the New Orleans City Council.

In his remarks Sweeney noted that although he may forget some of the events he has been involved in for the past 29 years, he will not forget the people whose lives have intersected his own.

"It's the camaraderie I'll miss the most," he said. "It's the people who make the experiences so memorable. Be they airmen, soldiers, sailors, or Marines, I'll always remember the willingness and the glad commitments they made to defend our country, and I'll always admire them for that."

He recalled speaking to the panel at the time of his interview to join the Air Force and being asked why he was volunteering for military service now that the draft was over.

"I told them that after all the years of freedom I enjoyed, four years was a small token to offer," he said. "But as you can see, it's taken a lot longer than four years."

He honored his nephew, Airmen 1st Class Shawn Sweeney, a "comrade currently serving in Saudi Arabia as a Security Police Officer," and he wished that his father, a retired Navy sailor could have been alive to share this special day with him, "but I know he is with us in spirit."

Col. Sweeney also thanked his DIMHRS team members, "I can't over-compliment them enough for all they've done and for their hard work," he said.

VADM Tracey also spoke of the importance that DIMHRS will have in making the quality of life easier for the warfighter.

"Col. Sweeney and his team have taken DIMHRS from a contentious idea to an eagerly awaited possibility," she said. "DIMHRS is what we need for the future of our HR system, and it'll be Capt. Carpenter's challenge to keep the coalition together."

Prior to taking over as DIMHRS new Program Manager, Capt. Valerie Carpenter served as the Deputy Program Manager for Battle Force Tactical Trainer with the Program Executive Officer for Information Technology (PEO(IT)). She has also served in Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWARSYSCOM) as the Project Officer for the Theater Ballistic Missile Defense and Tactical Information Broadcast system application for the Global Command and Control System and the C4I Liaison Officer to the Marine Corps Systems Command.

During her SPAWARSYSCOM tour she completed the Defense Systems Management College Program Manager's Course and was selected as a member of the Acquisition Professional Community.

"I was honored, pleased and slightly apprehensive when asked if I would be interested in becoming the DIMHRS Program Manager," she said. "Apprehensive because it took me two weeks to find anyone who knew what DIMHRS stood for and what the program was. Pleased because I would have the opportunity to change and correct personnel and pay processes that I knew were broken based on my Personnel Support Detachment (PSD) experiences during Desert Shield/Storm and honored, since as a new engineering duty officer and the deputy program manager for a smaller ACAT IV M program, I was being asked to take on a full-fledged Joint ACAT I program."

Also in attendance were Dale Galloway and Mike Kirsch of SPAWAR Information Technology Center; Steve Erhler, Eileen Roberson, Donna Seymour, and Gary Falconer of the Program Executive Office for Information Technology (PEO (IT)); Norma St. Clair and Alan Tidwell of the Joint Requirement and Integration Office and Sylvia Hanneken of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service.